



THE BUILDING PROJECT AND WORK PROGRAM

In September, 1940, Black Mountain College began construction, largely with student and faculty labor, on the first unit of a comprehensive building program on its own property. The cooperative building project—in 1940-41 of a seventy-five room modern building—not only assists in the solution of an economic problem but also constitutes, through the work program, an extension of one of the College's educational ideas.

The idea of some manual work for students is a corollary of the College's concept of general education. Voluntary practical activities, on different levels, have always been regarded as part of general education and as indispensable to the full development of the student. The participation by students in the present building project is, then, the fruition of a fundamental idea rather than an innovation or a change in ideology. Nevertheless, the project is of much greater scope than previous undertakings and plays a larger role in the community life.

The work program does not interfere with academic study but tends to enhance it through the general invigoration produced by intelligently varied activity. Students volunteer for three to nine hours of work a week, depending on their schedules and their strength. Once they have signed up to work on fixed days, they are expected to appear on those days unless illness prevents. Many members of the faculty and staff also participate in the project on the same basis. Thus it is a community enterprise and provides another area for free and informal contact as well as a point of common interest.

The buildings were designed with a modern construction appropriate to non-professional workers. The program includes all types of work that the erection of such buildings on a new site entails: